

# HOW A WASHINGTON POLICE OFFICER'S INTREPID BRAVERY GAVE HONDURAS CONSTABULARY MORALE THAT CLEANED UP NATION

## LIEUT. STOTT SEIZED MOB RINGLEADER WHEN RABBLE STAGED FIGHT

Politics and Discontent, With Poorly Equipped Police Force, Chief Obstacle He Faced When Sent to Central America as Director General of Honduras Police—Soldiers of Republic Were Inclined to Jeer at the Local Force Until District Man Showed Them the Way.

**A** LIEUTENANT of our Metropolitan police force recently was asked to organize a police department worthy of the name in the Republic of Honduras, Central America. This officer was worthy of the best traditions of the American policeman, quick to action, slow to anger, resourceful, determined.

He found the merest excuse for a disciplined body of constabulary in Honduras. He left it an outfit organized and capable of enforcing order and protecting the public peace. The Washington Times asked him to write his experiences for a special article. The only fault, if there is one, in his story is his modesty. A man who has walked into a seething rabble drunk with rum on a fete day, and seized the ringleader even though shot through the face in the attempt, and who dismisses such an action with a single paragraph, is worth listening to.

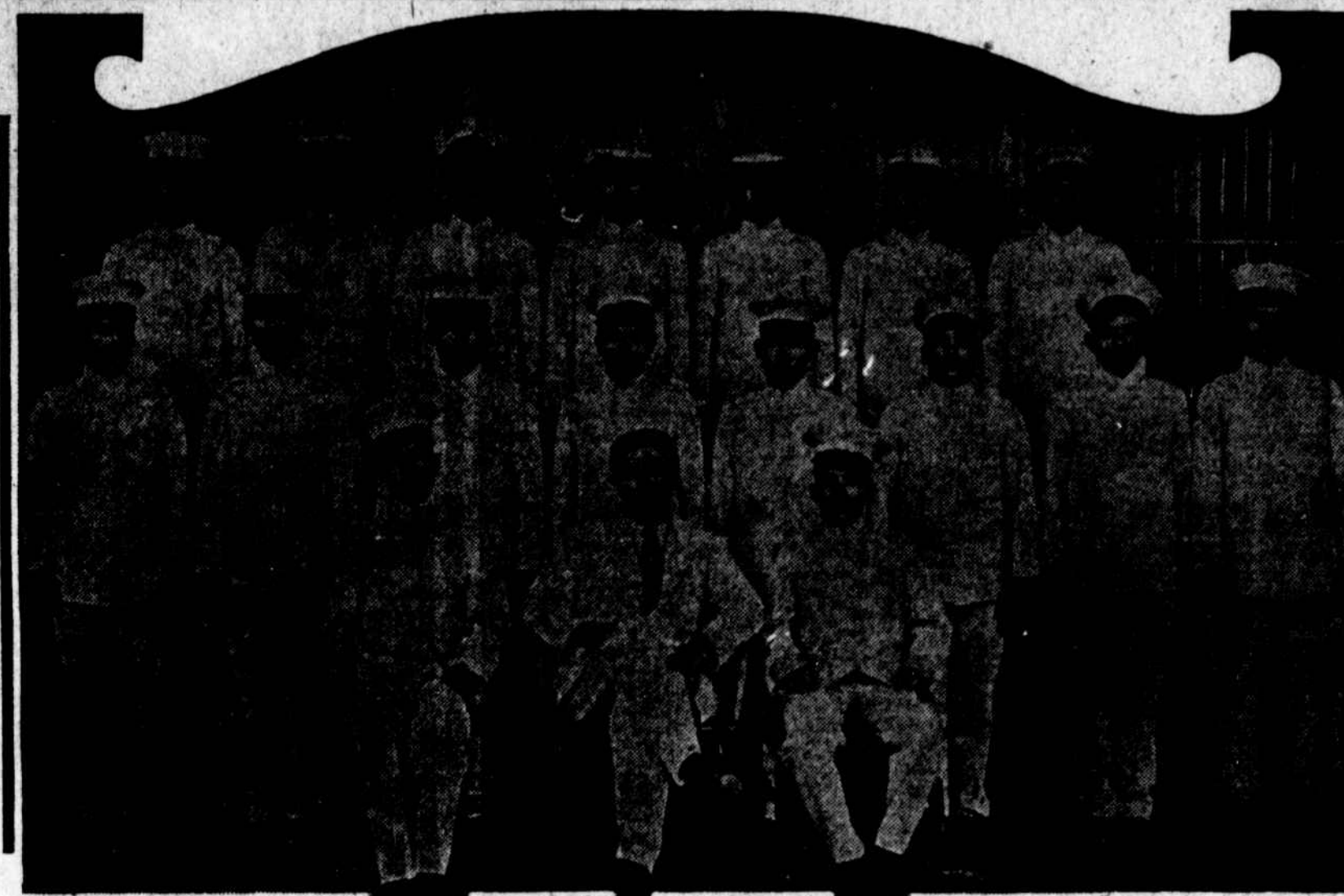
**D**URING the latter part of 1920, the Honduran Minister at Washington on instructions received from the President of Honduras requested the American State Department to use their good offices in securing the services of an American Police expert for the purpose of establishing a police school of instruction at Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and to reorganize the police forces of the Republic along modern lines.

On recommendation of Major Harry L. Gessford and the approval of Commissioner Thilman Hendrick my name was forwarded to the State Department for approval. After several conferences with officials of the State Department and Senor Antonio Lopez Gutierrez, Honduran minister at Washington, arrangements were made for me to leave in company with Mr. Stott and a secretary on January 1, 1921, and by the northern route, that is, by the way of New Orleans, thence by steamer through the Straits of Yucatan and Gulf of Mexico to Puerto Cortes, Honduras, and then overland to the Capitol, a distance of about 216 miles, part of the trip on mule back, stopping at the cities and towns for the purpose of inspecting the police forces located at points touched by me on the journey.

On the arrival of our party at New Orleans we boarded the Cuyamel fruit line steamer Marau. After an uneventful passage of three days the party arrived safely at the port of Puerto Cortes. On drawing near the shore line a long stretch of land came into view. This, we were informed, was Puerto Cortes, the principal Atlantic seaport of Honduras. The town was stretched along the railroad, in most places a single line of native shacks, some of the houses being partly built on piles driven into the sea. As the ship slowly steamed toward the dock, a motley crowd of Hondurans and blacks came into view, nearly all barefooted and dressed in clothes of every color of the rainbow. Here and there was a man dressed in solid linen with a rifle slung across his shoulders. These, we were informed, were members of the company of Honduran Infantry stationed at the barracks. I was to learn this was a sample of the material from which it would be necessary to form a modern police department.

**A YANKEE HOTEL KEEPER.** On learning that the new Director General of National Police was a passenger on the Nicrau, the General in charge of the Military district presented his compliments with the information that his car was at our disposal for the purpose of taking the party to the Palms Hotel situated about a mile up the railroad track. The car arrived, an ordinary hand car running on the railroad such as is used by section hands in America, but provided with a seat in front for passengers. Our trunks were piled on behind, our party squeezed into the one seat, and with two soldiers pushing the car we were on our way to the hotel. The Palms Hotel proved to be a rather nice place run by an American by the name of Burke, who had been, as we were informed, at one time the Treasurer of the State of Louisiana and had served in the Confederate army as a major, leaving for Honduras shortly after the civil war. On conversing with the Major he proved to be a delightful entertainer and well informed on current events, stating that he had

**WHEN** Lieut. William G. Stott, of this city, went to Honduras to organize the national police force, he found a poor nucleus to build upon. The policemen were ragged and barefoot and were paid off each night with a few pesos, which were spent for liquor. The citizens paid no attention to the police and the soldiers scorned them. When Lieutenant Stott left Honduras the force numbered 6,000, was uniformly equipped, as indicated in the photograph below, and was rapidly winning the respect of all.



Section National Police Amapala Honduras



Major Napoleon Alcantara Sub Director General Nat. Police



Lieut. Wm. G. Stott Director Genl. Honduran Natl. Police

general a reception on his arrival. From this place and after riding three days over the mountains through the never ending tropical rains, and through the towns of Miramba, Pueblo Nuevo and Siguatepeque, inspecting the police forces or arranging for the installation of forces we arrived at the town of Comayagua, the ancient capital of Honduras. Waiting for the party was a fleet of automobiles sent by President R. Lopez Gutierrez to convey us to Tegucigalpa, some seventy-six miles over the splendid highway built during the administration of President Bertrand. The road was built at a great cost, and after six years with very little repair is still in a good state of preservation, a striking illustration of what the Hondurans could do in the ways of improvements if they were so minded.

### CALLS ON PRESIDENT.

On our arrival at the capital we were conducted to the hotel Agurcia, a modern hotel managed by an American for the Agurcia family, one of the very few millionaire families of Honduras. Shortly after our arrival, Dr. Arthur Young called at the hotel and made arrangements for me to be received by the President at the palace the following Monday. Doctor Young being the American financial expert sent to

Honduras by the American State Department and at the request of the Honduran government for the purpose of revising the finances of the country.

On calling at the palace we were received by the President's secretary, and after a few moments we were requested to step into the reception room to be received by the President. On entering the room it was noticed that the President was holding a conference with his cabinet, we were invited to be seated and partake of some of the champagne being served at the time. Doctor Young presented my credentials and we were told that the matter would be taken up some time during the week and that I was to make myself comfortable at the hotel until that time arrived, which actually was a month later. During the time I was waiting for the Chamber of Deputies to ratify my contract, many conferences were had with President Gutierrez and who I found to be a very well educated and well intentioned man, desirous of advancing the interest of his country, but hampered to a great extent by the horde of office seekers claiming some reward for the part they had taken in the revolution by which President Gutierrez came into power. After taking active command of

the National Police I was to learn that it is a case of passing office seekers on to the other fellow, a perfect avalanche of ex-colonels, lieutenant colonels, captains and lieutenants descending on the office in Central Police station, possessing cards of recommendation from the President and Vice President. The cards stated in brief the applicants' military service and requested me to place them in the National Police. This I was unable to do, as the appropriation for the police was limited. The office seekers, on my inability to place them, in many cases seemed to think that for some reason of my own I had kept them out of positions which rightfully belonged to them.

### THE PLUM BRIGADE.

The police force at the capital consisted on paper at the time I took command of the National Police of 144 men of the line and eleven officers. After holding inspection it was found that quite a number who were drawing salary did not give any service, but were attending school or engaged in other vocations, the salary of the police department being received as a reward for political service. The police force at the time of being taken over by the National Police was under the command of Gen. Cliferno Delgado of the

Honduran army. The general did not take very kindly to the idea of an American in command of the National Police.

Major Napoleon Alcantara, a graduate of Tegucigalpa military academy, and who had seen service in command of the police forces of Puerto Cortes and San Pedro Sula, seemed to be the most likely candidate to fill his position. Accordingly orders were issued from the central office for the major to take over the capital force. On the major's arrival at police headquarters he was immediately placed under arrest by the general, who stated that he would not take orders from the National Police. The general seemingly involved the situation in his satisfaction by removing the major's uniform and confining him to his room, dressed in his underclothes. After I made a personal visit to his room, department and on intervention by the President, the general was shown the error of his ways and disappeared from the scene.

Hardly any members of the capital force were provided with shoes, and they were dressed in clothes of every description, all being supplied with an old Remington rifle and sack carried with a cord across the shoulders containing twenty rounds of ammunition.

## A Few Rifle Shells in a Cotton Sack and a Repeater Constituted the Field Equipment of the Honduras Police When Lieutenant Stott Went to Change the Styles in Coppers. Politics and Graft Were Main Obstacles.

tion. They had no idea of police work, simply in many cases aimlessly wandering the streets. It was a common sight at first to see a policeman intoxicated from native rum, discharging his rifle in the air, and terrorizing the citizens. Instead of being a protection the police were a menace.

This condition was remedied as rapidly as possible, necessitating the discharge of nearly the entire force, replacing them with whatever material could be had. The new personnel proved to be the same caliber in about 50 per cent of cases. Contracts were given out for new uniforms from habili found in the government storehouse, the President having to intervene with the Secretary of War to turn it over to the police.

In conjunction with the police school and the worry and trouble with the force at the capital all other police forces in the republic had to be directed by telegraph. I was unable to straighten out matters by a flying trip in auto on the south coast where good roads were provided, or by a several day trip by mule back where there were no roads. With hardly any assistance worth speaking of from the Honduran aides, the work was well nigh impossible of accomplishment. One of the officials with natural ability began to bring the needed reforms in his precinct. He met with determined opposition and persisting in his purpose was assassinated by two of his own men in the streets of his town, the police using their rifles for the death shots.

During the month of March a noticeable change was apparent in the department and it began to look as though order could be brought out of chaos, but that remained to be seen. One of the National holidays of Honduras is the Semana Santa or Easter week, the festivities lasting from five to seven days, all government departments closing and people coming into the city from the surrounding country. The processions held assume rather large proportions with the narrow streets cause great confusion. The youths of the town take this occasion to engage in merriment by throwing flour, mixed with water (and in some cases powdered lime) on the marchers.

Latin American's being of quick tempered dispositions, many fights occur and quite a few casualties. It was decided that this would not occur this year if it was possible to prevent it.

### ARTILLERYMEN ATTACK.

Orders were issued to mass the police along the line of march and to arrest anyone causing disorder. A number of arrests were made and after the youths saw that the police meant to enforce the law, they desisted from disorder with threats that they would "get even" with the police. On the day of the last procession it was noticed that a large number of the members of an artillery company stationed in the capital were in civilian clothes. Word was brought to police headquarters that the artillery was going to attack the police as they had done in years previous. A request was sent to the commander of the artillery company to cancel leave, with the information that the same thing would be done with the police forces of the city. It was later learned that the request on the military authorities was ignored.

After the last procession had been held and the police dismissed with instructions to the officers to see that the order in regard to "no liberty" should be strictly enforced, they were marched to the police barracks and a guard placed on the entrance to the barracks. The ruffians who took part in the uprising seemed to think that this was the opportune time to strike their blow. Word was brought to me at the International Club that the artillery had begun to attack. On proceeding towards the police barracks and arriving at an intersection of two streets I noticed a policeman running with his rifle in his hands. On arriving at the corner it was seen that he was being pursued by a mob of several hundred persons, and who were discharging their revolvers. In company with Lieut. Col. Velazco, I ordered the mob to disperse. The mob did not pay any attention to the order and we were compelled to open fire, two of the mob being killed at this time. Seeing that we were powerless in face of the ringleader, it was decided to arrest the ringleader. Accordingly, I ordered the throng and made the arrest.

using the prisoner for a shield. I began picking my way down the street, the mob not resuming fire until some distance had been covered.

At this time Major Alcantara arrived with a squad of police and opened fire on the mob, which was the means of dispersing them for the time being, although insubordinating fire was heard about the city until early the next morning, policemen in the suburbs being attacked. The next day was utilized by the families of those killed in burying the dead, seven in all, one being a military funeral, an artilleryman being one of those killed. **POLICE WERE COCKY.**

In all the police seemed to be very well pleased with the outcome, as I was informed that in previous years they had come out second best in their encounters with the military. This year no casualties resulted in the police department and no injuries sustained, with the exception of myself, having received a glancing revolver shot wound in the face and struck in the side with a large piece of concrete thrown by one of the mob.

Two of the men later arrested proved to be a captain and lieutenant of the army in civilian clothes and were later sent to the penitentiary.

Quite an insistent demand was made on the President to the effect that the director general of National Police should tender his resignation, blaming the police for the uprising and causing the death of citizens of Honduras. President Gutierrez declared that the police had acted in a creditable manner and were justified in their actions, the same stand being taken by the local newspapers as well as by members of the Honduras chamber of deputies, who forwarded letters to police headquarters.

During the month of April orders were issued by the President for myself and staff to proceed to the north coast for the purpose of organizing two mounted companies of police and at the same time for me to report to the hospital at Tela for medical observation, the wound in my face giving me some trouble, infection having set in. After a week's ride over the mountains and arriving at San Pedro Sula, word was received from the hospital that the X-Ray machine was not in working order. To complicate matters, Mrs. Stott had developed a severe case of nervous prostration caused, no doubt, by her harrowing experience at Tegucigalpa. On notifying the President by telegraph of the condition of affairs orders were received for me to proceed to New Orleans for medical treatment. After assigning Major Alcantara to La Ceiba for the purpose of reorganizing the police force stationed there, arrangements were made to return to the United States.

On arriving at New Orleans it became necessary to take Mrs. Stott north. Finding it impossible under two months and leave granted for a period of three weeks my resignation was cable to the President of Honduras and accepted by him May 6, 1921, thereby ending my experience for the time being as director general of national police of the Republic of Honduras.

## Electrons Inseparable From Ether Waves

**A** REMARKABLE theory has been evolved by Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, the eminent British scientist, as the result of philosophical calculations dealing with the constitution of matter, which is composed in all cases of electrons, or negatively electrified particles, attached to central charges of positive electricity.

The result of his work, says Lord Clifford, has established that all wave-lengths smaller than 24,360 to the inch are what we term positive electricity, and all wave-lengths above 68,720 and below 103,078 to the inch constitute negative electrons. The intermediate waves, Lord Clifford suggests, should be called "color electrons," as all shades of color are produced by these waves of electricity.

The radiations of the ether which produce color are essential, according to the theory, to the cohesion of the negative and positive electricity which constitutes atoms.

The new theory suggests that electrons themselves are inseparable from ether waves, and once the wave-length can be found of the radiation responsible for the combination of any one electron with any other, we shall be able to calculate the conditions under which all the elements are formed.